

January 1965

Dear Bob:

With reference to your proposal to discontinue the Net Evaluation Subcommittee of the National Security Council, I am in agreement with your draft memorandum to the President which you sent me on 23 December 1964.

In my opinion, the work of the Subcommittee and its staff was necessary when they were established in 1959. The Subcommittee has made a valuable contribution since that time, but I agree that it has served its purpose and should now be dis-established.

Sincerely,

s/ JOHN

John A. McCone
Director

The Honorable Robert S. McNamara
Secretary of Defense
Washington, D. C.

WElder:MMW (4Jan65)

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Remarks:			
<p>Mr. Kirkpatrick had originally marked the basic for AD/NE for action (via you). You prepared the response , but no copies of either the basic or the response are marked for ONE. The orig routing slip which had been put on here was removed when the basic got back to ER. If ONE should have copies will you pls ask Mary to take care of it.</p> <p>O/ExecDir/Rita</p> <p><i>Cop 7 made for AD/NE info per Rita</i></p>			
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THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
WASHINGTON

23 DEC 1964

MEMORANDUM FOR The Secretary of State
The Chairman, Atomic Energy Commission
The Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff
The Director of Central Intelligence
The Chairman, Interdepartmental Intelligence
Conference
The Chairman, Interdepartmental Committee
on Internal Security

Attached is a copy of a proposal that the Net Evaluation
Subcommittee of the National Security Council be discontinued.

Any comments you may have would be welcome. It is my
present intention to submit the proposal to the President early
in January.

Robert S. McNamara

Attachment

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THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

WASHINGTON

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

SUBJECT: Elimination of the Net Evaluation Subcommittee of the National Security Council

As part of a continuing effort to increase the efficiency and quality of various study programs, I have for some time questioned the value of continuing the work of the Net Evaluation Subcommittee (NESC) of the National Security Council (established by NSC 5816).

When the NESC was established by President Eisenhower in 1958, neither the Joint Chiefs of Staff Organization nor the Office of the Secretary of Defense included a capability for performing the type of study assigned to the NESC. The original directive charged the NESC with providing "integrated evaluations of the net capabilities of the USSR, in the event of general war, to inflict direct injury upon the Continental United States and to provide a continual watch for changes which would significantly alter those net capabilities." Subsequent directives have altered this task on an annual basis. For example, the most recently completed NESC study was an evaluation of a "war conducted in 1964 between the U.S., its Allies, and the Soviet Bloc based on current U.S. war plans." Further, the over-all purpose of the report was to "evaluate the validity and feasibility of this type analysis as a basis for providing guidance for political-military planning...."

Having studied the 1964 Report, I do not feel that a brief survey of this type qualifies as a basis for planning guidance. As a broad survey of the problem, it is not without merit; but our strategic planning today is increasingly based upon more detailed studies of specific problem areas, such as those included on the Secretary of Defense's annual "Project List" and other studies conducted by the Joint Staff and military departments.

For example, the Special Studies Group (SSG) of the Joint Chiefs of Staff has developed a broader base of expertise than that of the NESC staff. Both groups have explored similar issues, used the

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same sources of input, obtained the same computer support, and have performed the same type of analysis. Because of the close relationship of strategic studies to forces, the budget, and other on-going Defense Department studies, the usefulness of the SSG studies has been understandably greater than the annual survey of the NESC.

The economy involved in eliminating a major study group is obvious. We can, I feel, make better use of our limited study skills while simultaneously improving the product delivered to the consumer. Participation in DoD studies by other government agencies is, of course, welcomed when warranted by the subject matter. Similarly, we remain responsive to requests for study reports from other interested agencies of the government.

In summary, while the annual study program of the NESC had value and relevance in 1958, its contribution today is marginal when compared to the battery of specific studies which have become major functions of the JCS and DoD during the intervening years. It therefore appears logical to terminate the requirement for the NESC. Attached is a draft implementing directive for signature.

Attachment

THE WHITE HOUSE

Effective this date, the Net Evaluation Subcommittee of the
National Security Council, having served its purpose, is discontinued.
This directive supersedes NSC 5816.

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NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

NET EVALUATION SUBCOMMITTEE

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301

19 November 1964

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

SUBJECT: General Goodpaster's Comments on Proposed NESC Tasks for 1965

1. The purpose of this memorandum is to inform you that:

a. The NESC's assignment has been under active consideration in General Wheeler's office.

b. While no immediate action appears required, you will probably be involved in basic decisions regarding the NESC's mission in the relatively near future.

ER has no record. This memorandum brings up-to-date my memorandum to you of 9 November.

2. General Johnson told the staff today that he had just talked to General Goodpaster about the NESC's next assignment. He quoted Goodpaster to approximately the following effect:

a. There is no point in reassessing the effects of a strategic exchange between the US and the USSR, since this is already being done by all sorts of organizations. If this is the only realistic option, he implies, the best thing would be to abolish the NESC.

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b. The second and third proposed tasks, (especially the second, with its emphasis on assessing the whole range of possible confrontations with Communist China) made more sense. But what was probably needed the most was an even broader study, which Goodpaster envisaged as assessing the overall problem as to where the US would stand about ten years out vis-a-vis the rest of the world--militarily, politically, economically, and so on. He expressed the hope that while some policy-makers wished to continue the ad hoc decision-making practices of the Kennedy era, there would probably be more support now under President Johnson for an attempt to lay out the whole range of problems confronting us on a long-term basis.

c. Goodpaster acknowledged that this task would require a change in the NESC charter but argued that in any event the choice was between updating the NESC's mission or abolishing it. He evidently shared General Johnson's view that the NESC staff, if only because it had the time for unhurried and thorough analysis, was uniquely qualified to handle this and similar assignment and should be kept in business.

d. Goodpaster had expressed these views to General Wheeler, who had favorable initial reactions but felt the time was not yet propitious to press for a decision: the real problem here was that of approaching Mr. McNamara. Goodpaster suggested that at least we could start laying out the problem.

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3. General Johnson is definitely interested in taking on the job proposed by Goodpaster, which he almost certainly regards as something akin to the Basic National Security Policy restatement recommended in last year's NESC study. We had no really detailed discussion of how to proceed, but he indicated that what he had in mind was a venture involving the assignment of some appropriate specialists (e.g., economists) to the staff and the preparation of supporting studies by various agencies (presumably including State and CIA). He expressed the hope that we could get the job substantially done before those members of the staff whose tours of duty ended next summer had to leave.

4. I must confess to some initial misgivings about our undertaking as unrestricted and all-inclusive an exercise as many of the staff appear to have in mind:

a. There is some question as to how much top level desire and need there is for such a paper--though admittedly this is something that the President, in consultation with his principal advisers, must decide for himself.

b. The long-range look into the future has been a recurrent source of fascination to policy-makers and intelligence programmers alike--and an equally recurrent headache to those actually charged with preparing and achieving substantial agreement on such projections in the estimates

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business. If an actual requirement exists, it must of course be tackled, but various past efforts to come up with meaningful papers of this sort in places like ONE have certainly not been very successful.

c. Finally, and most importantly, I question whether a predominantly military body like the NESC staff has either the bureaucratic standing or the professional qualifications to handle a comprehensive assessment of the American political, economic and military position in the world a decade hence. Granted that much of the basic work could be assigned to the intelligence community and to offices in Defense and State where the necessary expertise was available, I don't think that a comprehensive survey of this sort can be handled like a War College study group project. If there is a need for a long-range look at the military requirements which might confront the US, taking into account political and economic factors as needed, the NESC Staff would be a highly appropriate candidate for the job. If what is wanted is another statement of basic national policy requirements, political as well as military, then it seems to me that another kind of NSC staff should be set up in which the skills and approaches of the civilian agencies involved are more heavily represented.



CIA Representative
NESC Staff

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